



Admissions and Referral Policy (1 year reviews)

April 2026

The Paddock is a calm and nurturing alternative provision in Shropshire, offering personalised, research-informed support for young people who need a smaller, more flexible approach to learning. We specialise in helping academically capable students who currently find mainstream environments overwhelming, providing a peaceful space where they can re-engage, rebuild confidence, and thrive.

This policy supports The Paddock's aim of ensuring that every young person is able to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential. Our vision is to equip pupils with the skills, confidence and strategies they need to access education, enjoy education and to be ready to return to the most appropriate setting for them.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that The Paddock admits, as far as possible, pupils whose special educational needs can be met effectively, enabling them to make progress in all areas of their development. We seek to support pupils who have the potential, with the right provision, to return to mainstream education but who currently find the prospect of being in a mainstream setting a huge barrier.

The objectives of this policy are to make sure that everyone involved understands how decisions are made about whether The Paddock is the right placement for a young person. It ensures that:

- Families, young people and professionals know the **criteria** used when deciding if The Paddock can meet a young person's needs
- Everyone understands the **process** used to judge whether a placement is appropriate
- Families, young people, local authority SEND teams, Children's Services and other professionals have a clear picture of the **support, opportunities and provision** available at The Paddock
- All involved are aware of the **expectations and aspirations** for young people attending The Paddock

Process for admissions to The Paddock

Step 1 - application

Applications for a place at The Paddock are usually made by the current setting for the young person, by parents if currently EHE or the Local Authority if a Child in Care. Before a decision is made, we gather detailed information about the pupil, including family background, safeguarding history, previous school records, medical or health information (such as CAMHS reports), and any other relevant documents. A member of our senior team will visit the pupil both at home and in

their current setting if appropriate in order to gain a full understanding of their needs. All available information is then carefully reviewed to decide whether The Paddock can meet the pupil's needs and whether they meet our admissions criteria. If so, the pupil and their family will be invited to visit the Paddock.

The application needs to include how many hours (up to 15 a week) and on what days the placement is requested for. We try to be flexible for the days and times offered, although this may be dependent on other young people currently at the setting, and any specific learning needs of the applicant.

Step 2 - visits

When you and your child visit The Paddock, we want you to feel welcome, informed and confident about the next steps. The visit helps us understand your child's needs and helps you decide whether our school is the right fit. During the visit, you can expect:

- A conversation about your child's experiences so far, including their strengths, any challenges they have faced and what the recognised barriers to learning are
- A discussion with parents and carers about your hopes for the placement, and an explanation that our aim is to provide a nurturing stepping stone back into mainstream education whilst at the same time looking to close any gaps in learning
- A conversation with your child about what they hope to achieve at The Paddock
- A tour of the provision so you can see the environment and facilities
- Introductions to key members of staff
- A discussion with senior staff about important aspects of school life, including:
 - The curriculum
 - Key school policies
 - A feel for your time at the Paddock
- Time for you and your child to ask any questions you may have

This visit ensures that everyone has a clear understanding of what The Paddock offers and what the placement would involve.

Step 3 – Confirmation of placement

If, after the visit, everyone agrees that The Paddock can meet the young person's needs and that they will be able to access our provision with the resources available, and the family and young person are committed to the placement, the school will then formally offer a place. Once the offer is accepted and the service level agreement has been signed, arrangements for admission will be made.

Step 4 – Transition

Transition into **The Paddock** will be planned carefully to make sure the pupil feels safe, supported and ready for the change. This may include a gradual start, with attendance building up over time until the pupil is ready to attend for their full programme.

Admission Criteria

- Young people admitted to The Paddock will usually be between 11 and 18 years old (Key Stages 3, 4 and 5)
- The young person may have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), have a current EHCNA request submitted, or be in a Plan, Do, Review cycle.
- Any identified SEND will have highlighted Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and/or Emotional School Based Avoidance
- Young people will normally be working within the average or above range of cognitive ability.
- Admission requires a clear commitment from both the young person and their family to engage with the placement and work towards the shared goal of returning to mainstream education when appropriate.
- The young person's mainstream setting must agree to regular visits and to a reintegration programme designed with the Paddock.
- All agreed fees will be paid by the end of each calendar month as per the signed Service Level Agreement.

Policy	Admissions and Referral Policy
Date created	April 2026
Date reviewed	
Date of Next review	April 2027
Signed	
Luke Baker	L. Baker

THE
PADDOCK
A PLACE TO LEARN